

TOTAL ECLIPSE

BOOK ONE



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TOTAL ECLIPSE

TM



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SILENCE, FOR
FIVE THOUSAND
MILLION YEARS...

AND A SILENT
PLAINTIVE
WAIL AS A
UNIVERSE IS
BORN.

FIVE HUNDRED MILLION
YEARS AGO...

THE EARTH'S BLOOD
THICKENS AND HARDENS.

FLESH SCABS OVER
BURNING WOUNDS.

FOR FAR TOO LONG
THERE DWELLS
SILENCE.

A SECOND, PAINFUL MOAN
AS A PLANETARY SYSTEM IS
DISGORGE INTO THE COLD.

THEN COMES THE
FIRST SCREAM
OF NEW LIFE.

FROM ONE CELL TO
TWO AND MORE...

...AND ABOVE.

...TO THE FIRST
SLOW SPARK OF
THOUGHT.

FROM THE SEA
TO THE LAND...

FROM THE BEHEMOTH...

THERE WILL NO LONGER
BE SILENCE.



TOTAL ECLIPSE

NO LONGER IN SILENCE,
THE LIGHT SCREAMS...

THE BIRTHING CRY
IS NOT HEARD AS
THE UNIVERSE BELLows
IN AGONY AT THIS
UNHOLY ALIGNMENT.

"WE HAVE OFFENDED
YOU WITH THIS BIRTH.
SHALL WE SACRIFICE
THE INFANT?" THE
FATHER ASKS THE
GODS.



"DO SO NOW,"
THE LIGHTNING
SEEMS TO SHRIEK.

THEY DO...

...AND IN HORROR,
TIME AND AGAIN,
THEY FAIL.

•THE•

HE WILL
NOT DIE.

HE CAN
NOT DIE.

PLANETS IN ALIGNMENT...
STARS IN ALIGNMENT...

...CENTURIES
PASS BY, ONE
AFTER THE
OTHER AFTER
THE OTHER...

UNTIL THERE
IS NO DREAM TO
SHOUT OR SING.

AND THE ONLY HOPE
THAT SPARKS SOME
FAR-DISTANT LIGHT--

--IS SILENCE.

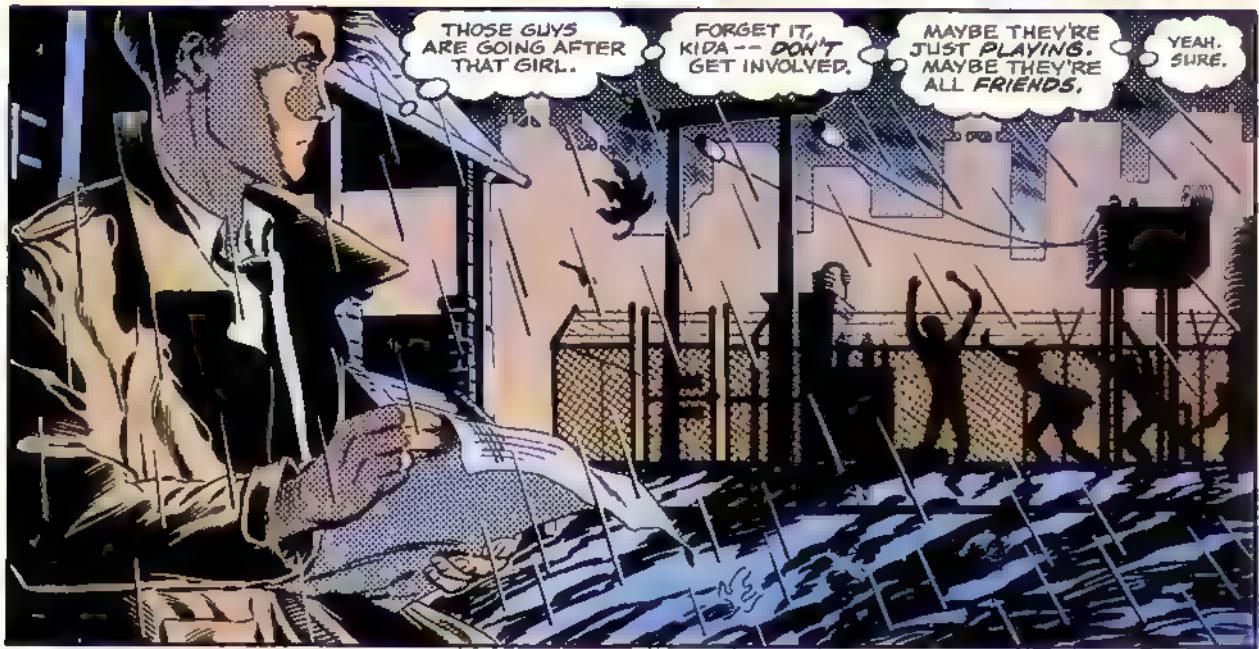


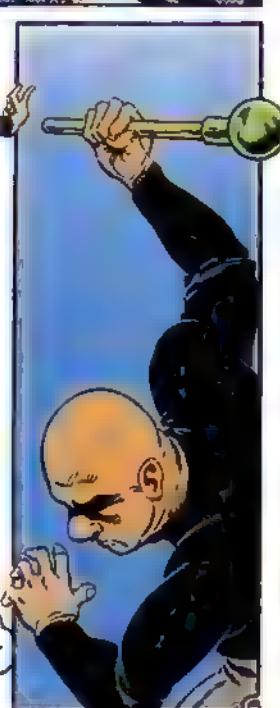
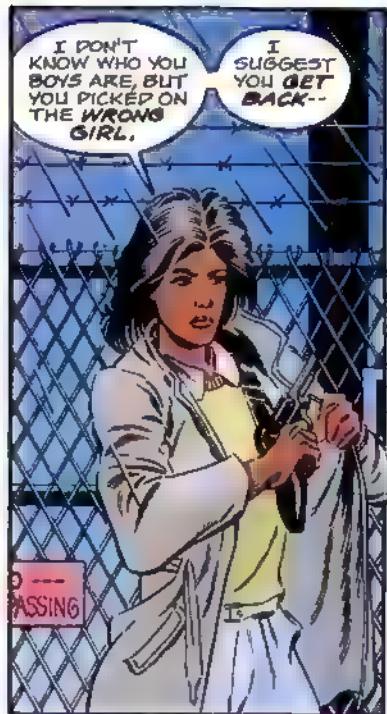
AND, ELSEWHERE, IF ONE COULD SEE THEM, THE DREAMS SEEM TO LAUGH!

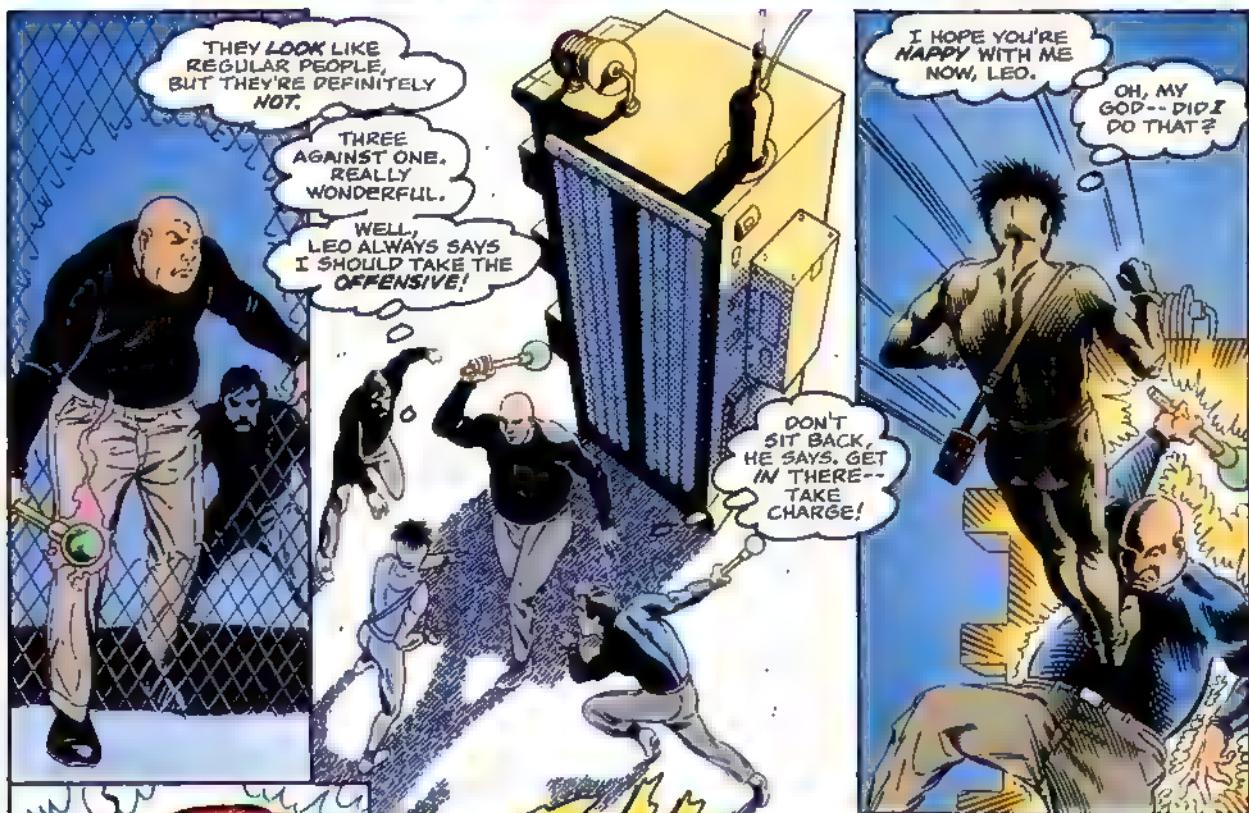
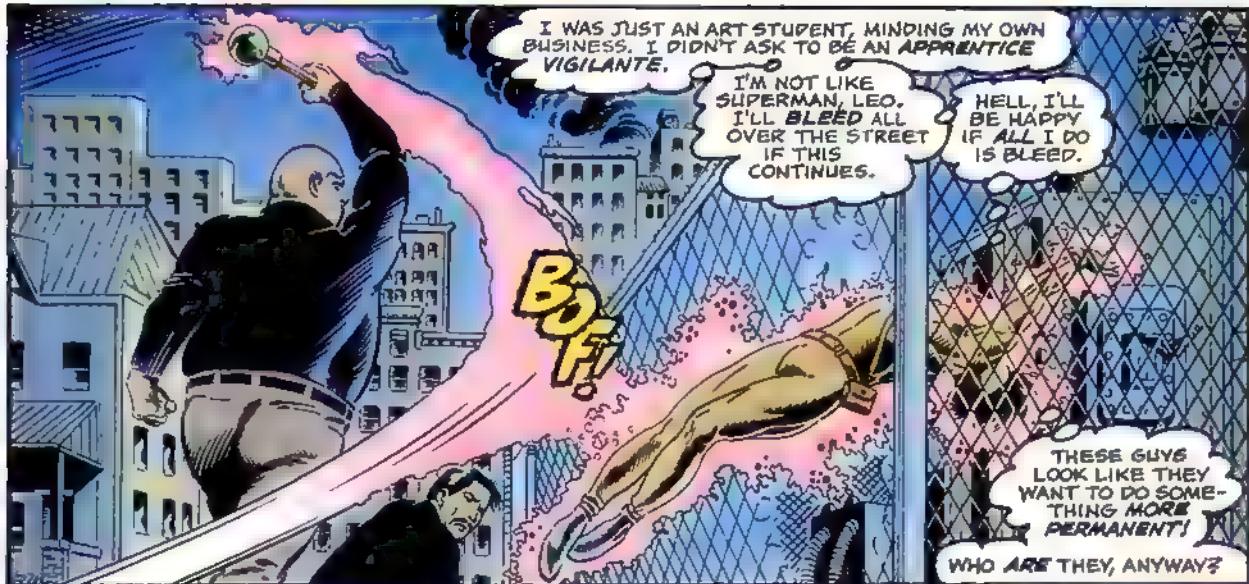
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND IS USUALLY JUST A QUIET CITY, A REST STOP FOR WEARY TRAVELERS BETWEEN NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON D.C.

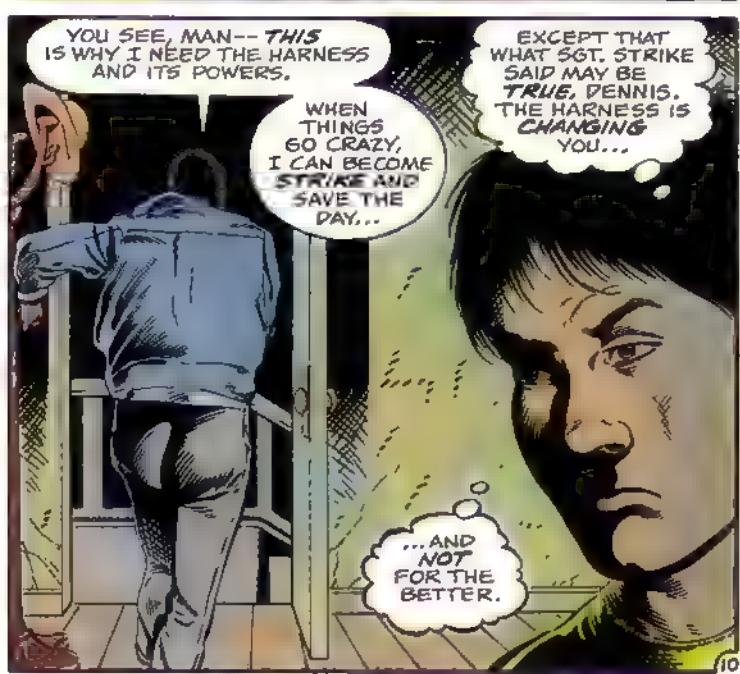
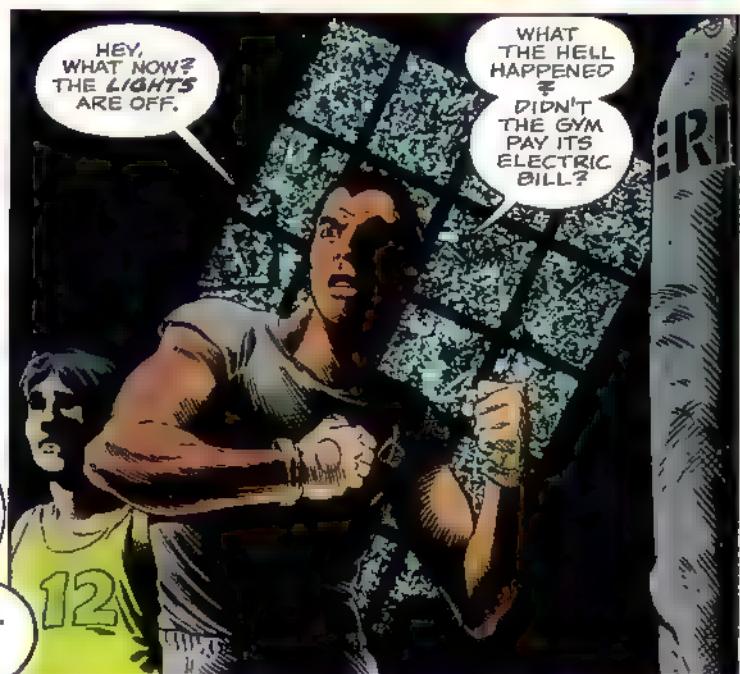
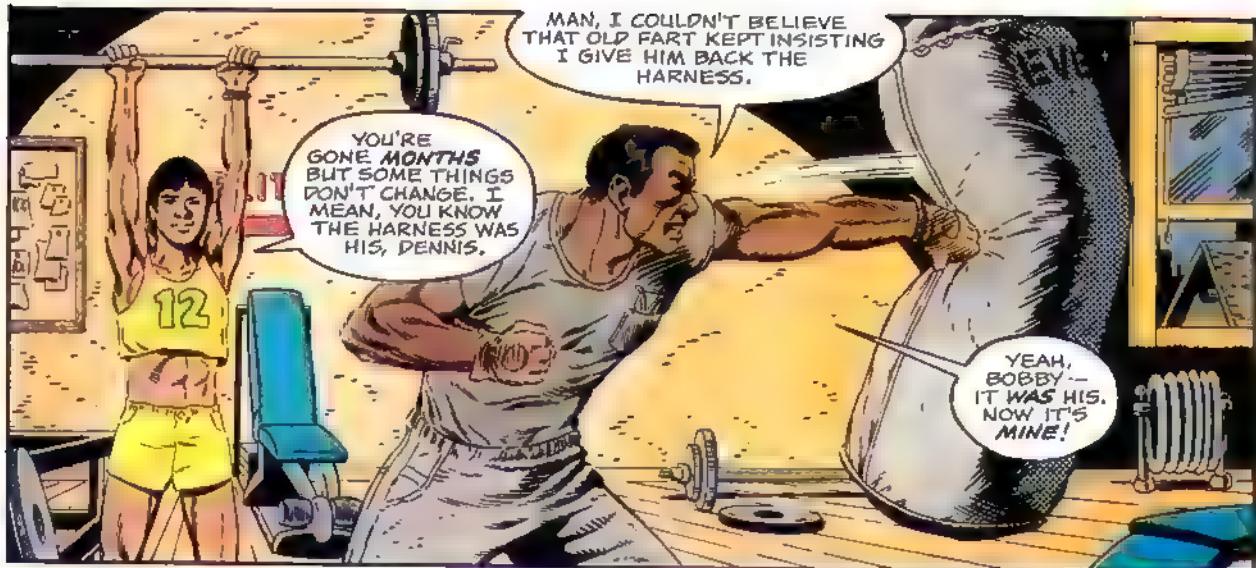
SOMETIMES, THOUGH, THE QUIET CAN BE VERY RUDELY SHATTERED.











THE TOWN
OF TAILSMITH,
GEORGIA...

DEVILWING
ONE TO
DEVILWING
TWO--

BD-DE-DIAMON

DINER
AIR-COndITIONED

NO
WAY, MAN--
EVER SINCE
'NAM, YOU
ALWAYS
HOGGED THE BIG
FUN.

--YOU TAKE
THE FREAKIN'
SIDE STREETS,
MAN, I WANT
THE MAIN DRAG
FOR MYSELF.

GRAT-TET

105

FOR ONCE IT'S GONNA
BE MY TURN TO PLAY
THE HICKS.

C'MON, YOU
STUPID JERKS--LET'S
SEE YOU DANCE!

LOOKIT
'EM, MAN.
THEY AL-
WAYS RUN.

HELL,
THIS TOWN'S
GONNA BE A
DOWNER.

TOO
EASY...TOO
FREAKIN'
EASY.

MEBBE
NOT.
LOOKIT
THERE.

THEY
THINK THEY
GOT THEMSELVES
A FREAKIN'
HERO.

PULL
'ER LOW...

I WANNA
CHECK THIS
MUTT OUT
MYSELF.

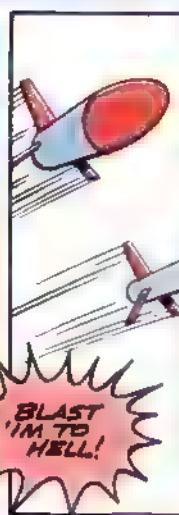
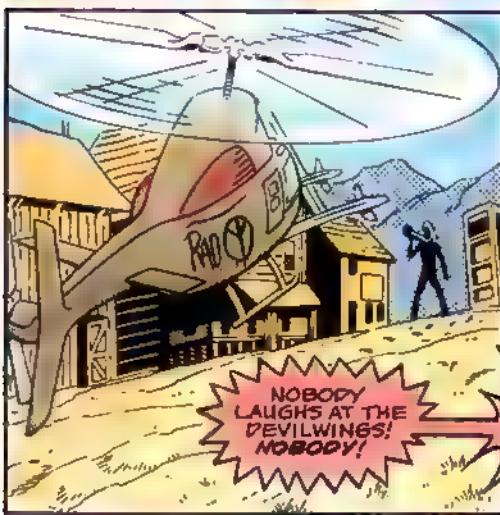
HELL, LOOKIT
THAT HARDWARE
HE'S LUGGIN'!

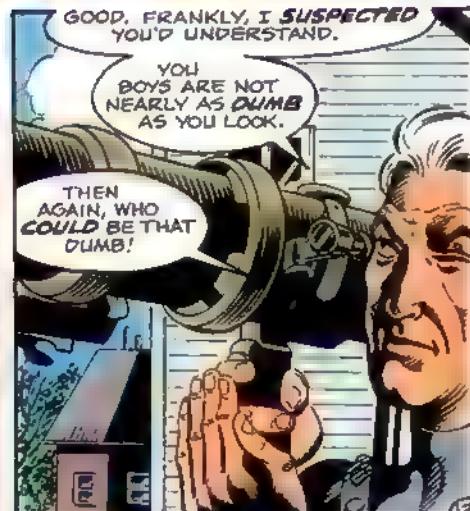
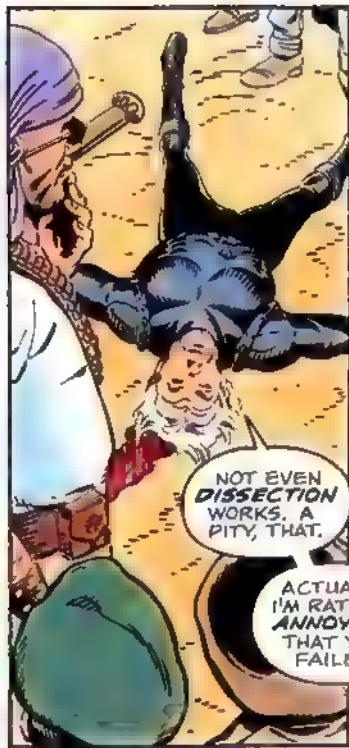
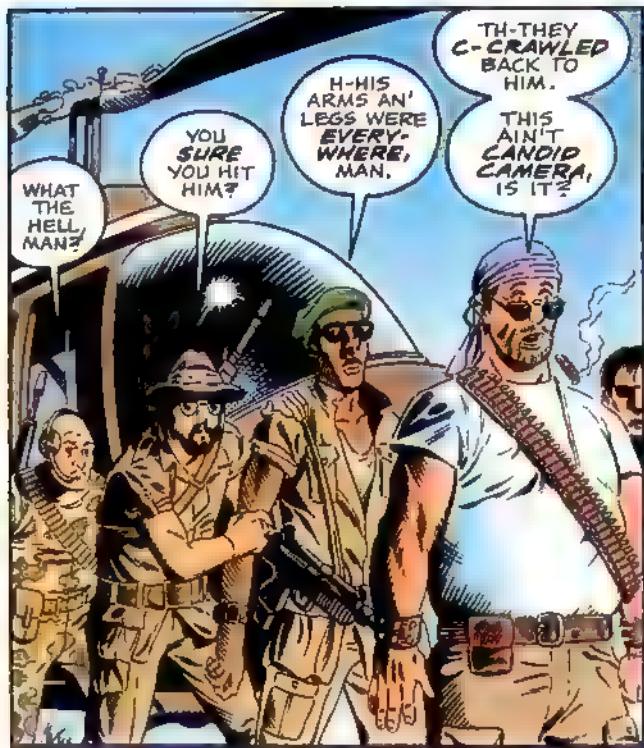
FAR
FREAKIN'
OUT, MAN!

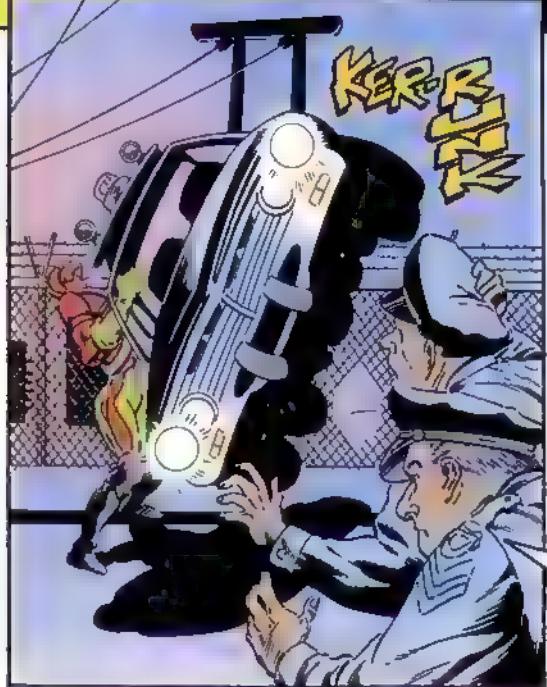
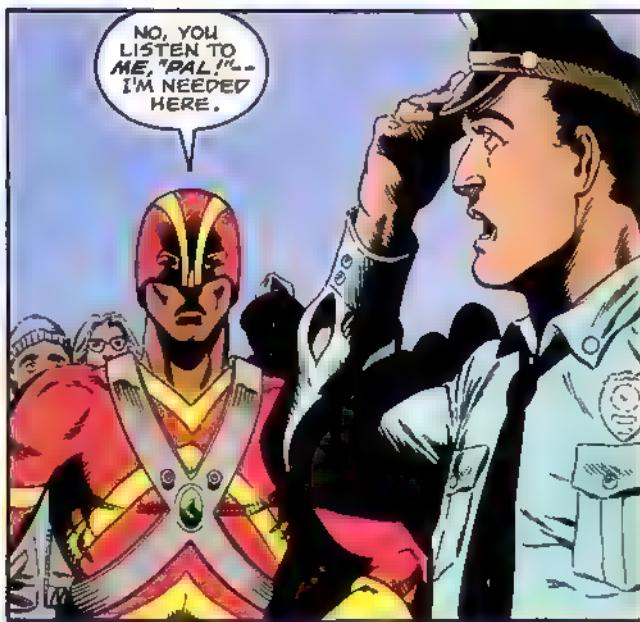
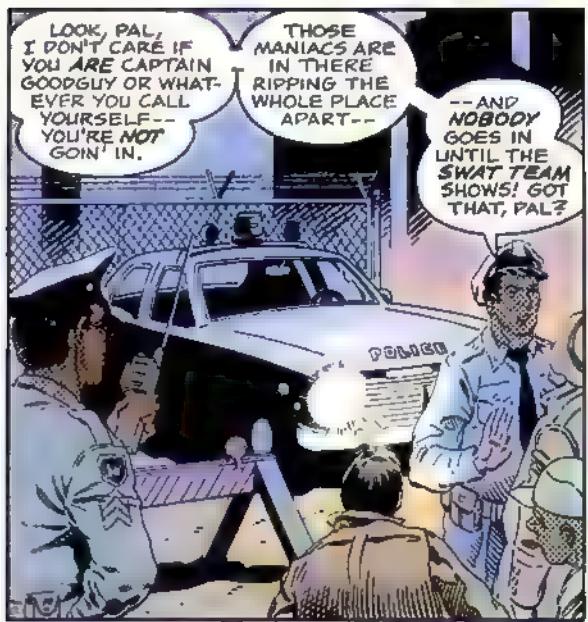
CLEAR OFF,
OLD MAN. AN'
LEAVE THE
'ZOOKA WHEN
YOU GO!

NO! THE
VOICES
SAID I
NEED
YOU.

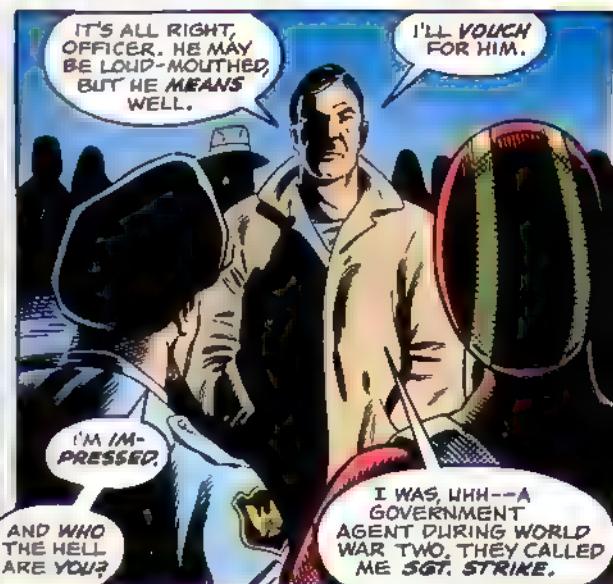
BUT IT
APPEARS
I MUST
CONVINCE
YOU THAT
YOU NEED
ME!

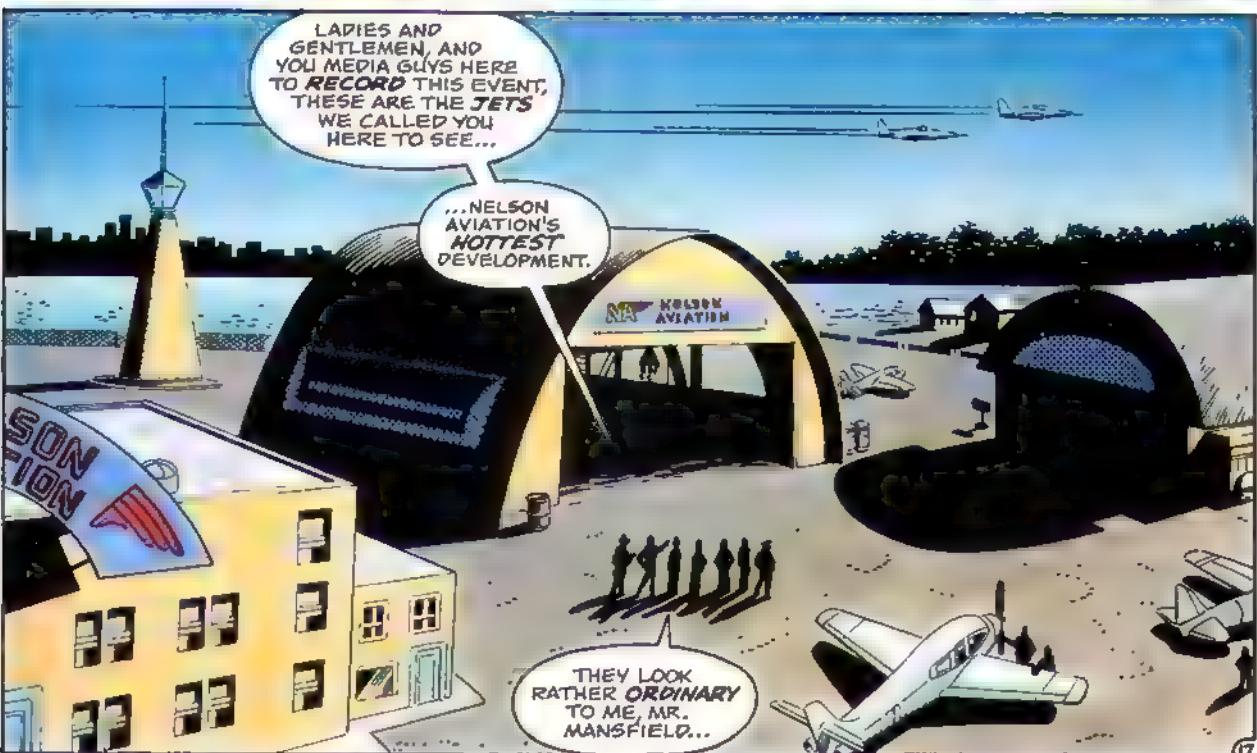


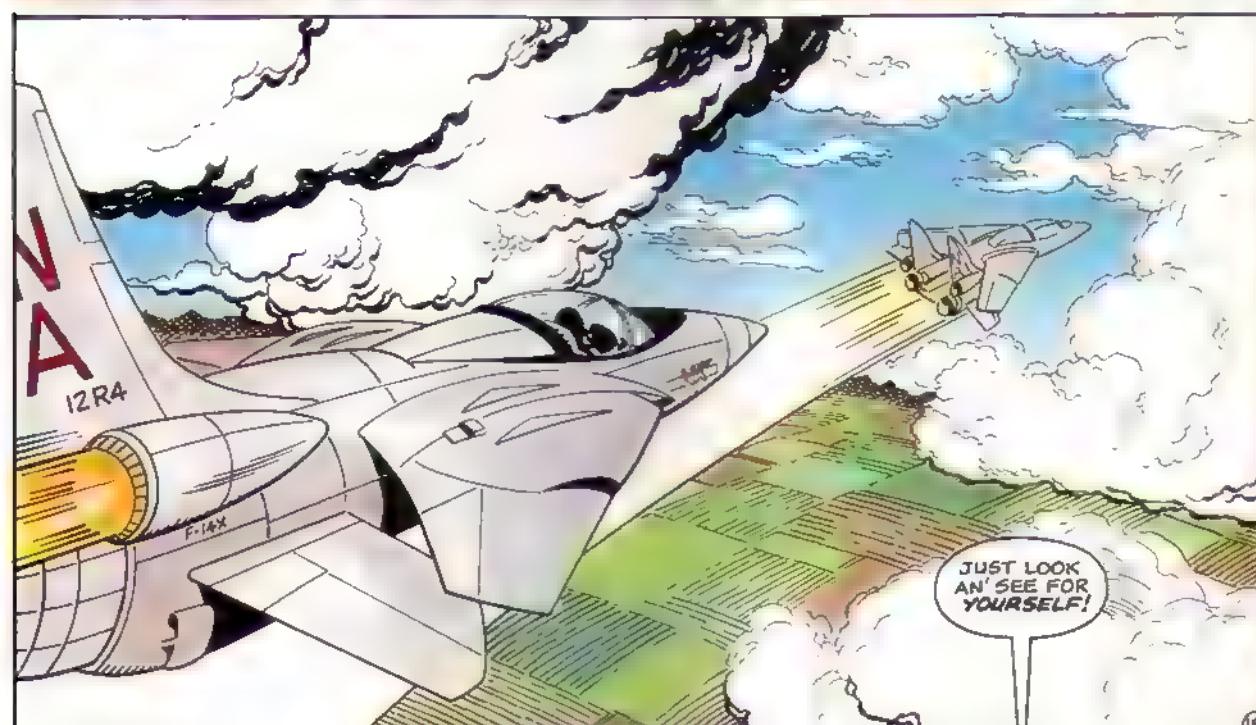
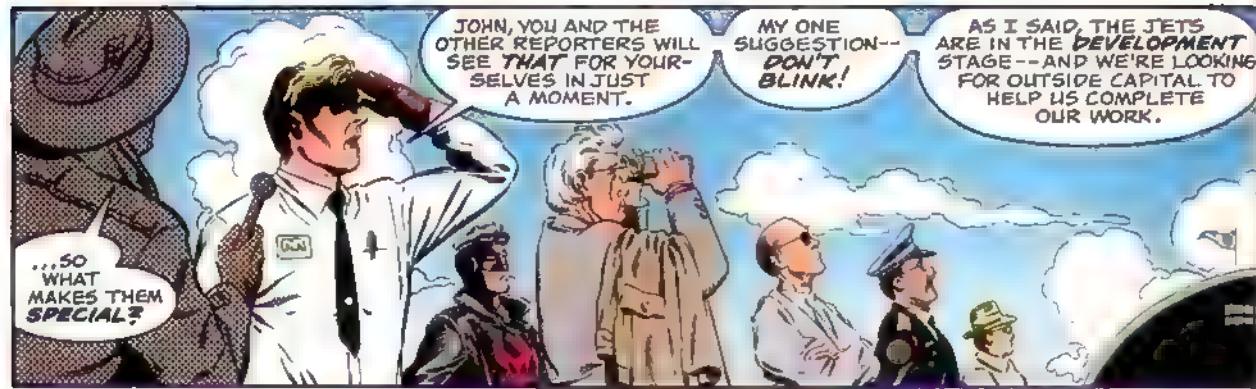












THOSE TWO BABIES RIDE LIKE A WHISPER. THE OPERATION'S SMOOTH-- TAKES MACH-5 LIKE A MERCEDES DOIN' 30.

BUT THE INDIVIDUAL RIDE'S ONLY PART OF IT.

WHAT YOU'RE GOIN' TO SEE NEXT IS REVOLUTIONARY! IT'LL CURL YOUR HAIR!

YOU READY, VAL?

I CAN'T WAIT, DAVY.

LET'S DO IT!

INITIATING MAG-LINK!

COPY, VAL.
I'M BEGINNING MY ROTATION NOW!

GET READY FOR LINKAGE!

PERFECT, DAVY-- JUST PERFECT!

SECURE LINKAGE... PREPARE FOR MAXIMUM THRUST!

CLICK

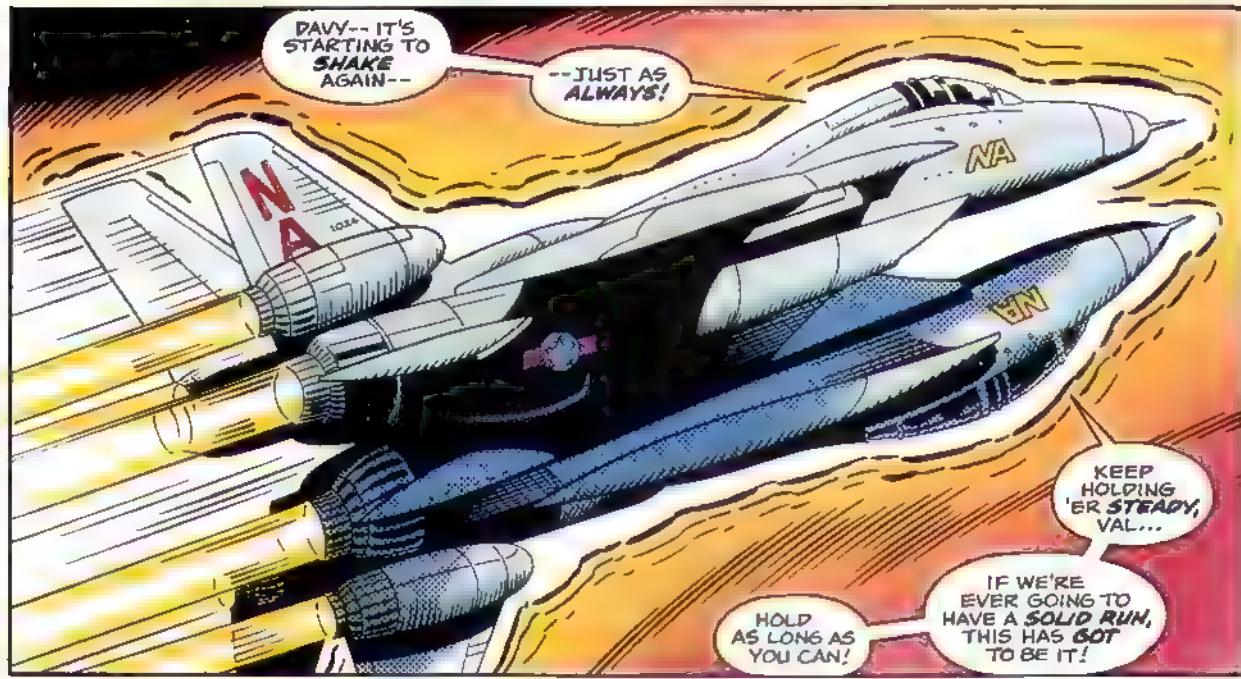
AT THE ZERO COUNT, VAL. 10-9-8-

THE TWO JETS ARE MAGNETICALLY LINKED, AND THEIR COMBINED ENGINES GIVE THEM THRUST UNMATCHED BY ANY SINGLE ENGINE.

KEEP ON WATCHIN'!

IT JUST GETS BETTER!





WE NEED TWO HUNDRED MILLION IN GUARANTEED LOANS TO COMPLETE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MAG-LINK DEVICE.

ONCE IT'S DONE WE HAVE AN AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVE TO ROCKET TRAVEL!

INCREDIBLE!

THE GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS ALONE SHOULD BE IN THE BILLIONS!

VAL, YOU THINK WE CAN GRAB SOME DINNER WHEN WE'RE DONE HERE?

I'M ALREADY FAMISHED.

I'LL COME BY YOUR OFFICE AFTER I'VE SHOWERED.

SO WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE "KID" NOW, PAL?

I-404

GOOD FLYING, DAVY.

HELLO, VAL- THAT WAS SOME FLYING!

WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE FROM BALTIMORE?

I. UHHH--

BLACK ANGEL? MEIN GOTT! I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE IN TOWN!

YOU SENSE SOMETHING IS WRONG, DON'T YOU?

WELL, IT DOESN'T MATTER.

WH-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

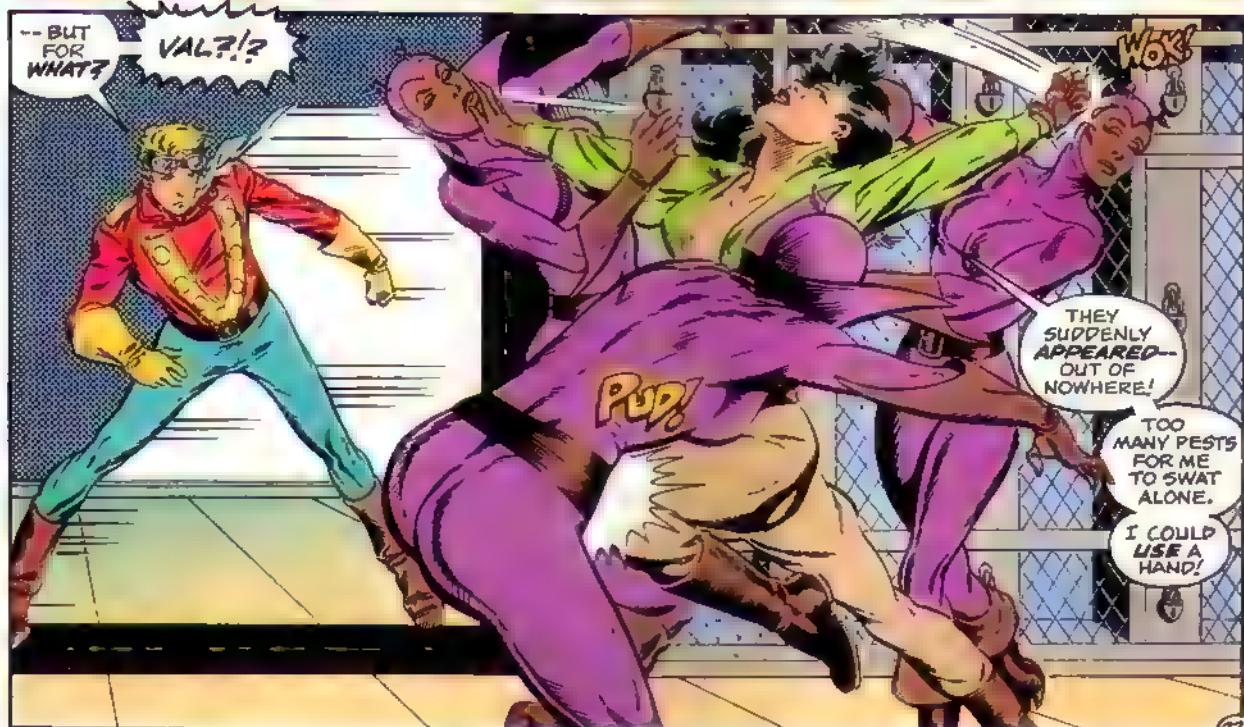
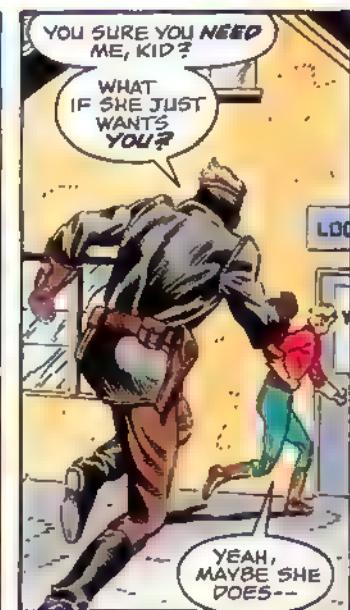
WE ARE DISCUSSING YOUR LAST MOMENTS HERE ON EARTH.

YOUR DEATH, VALKYRIE!

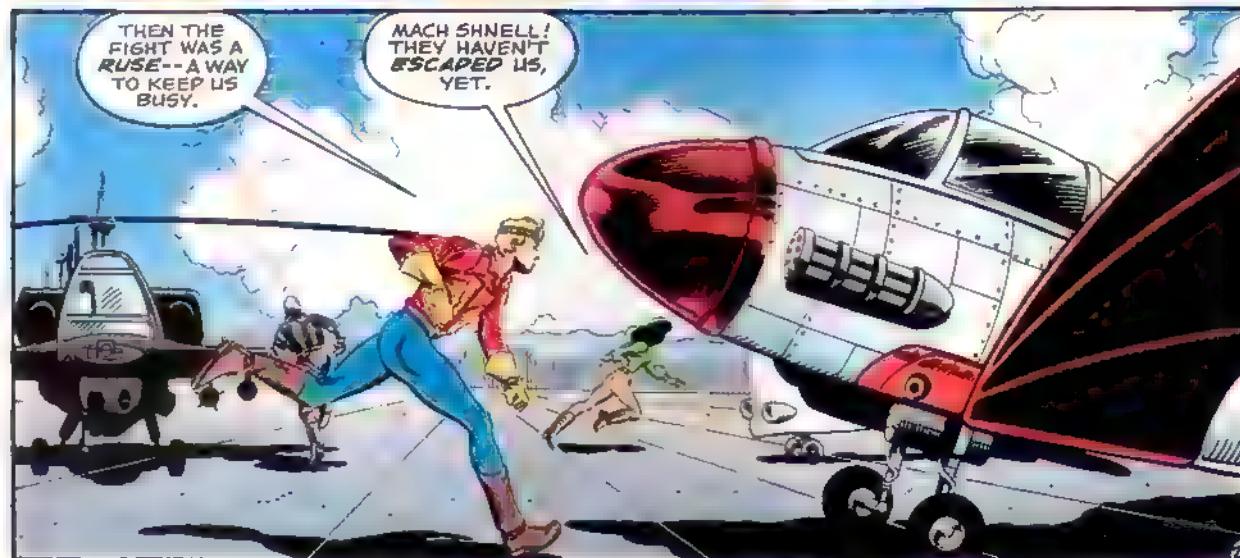
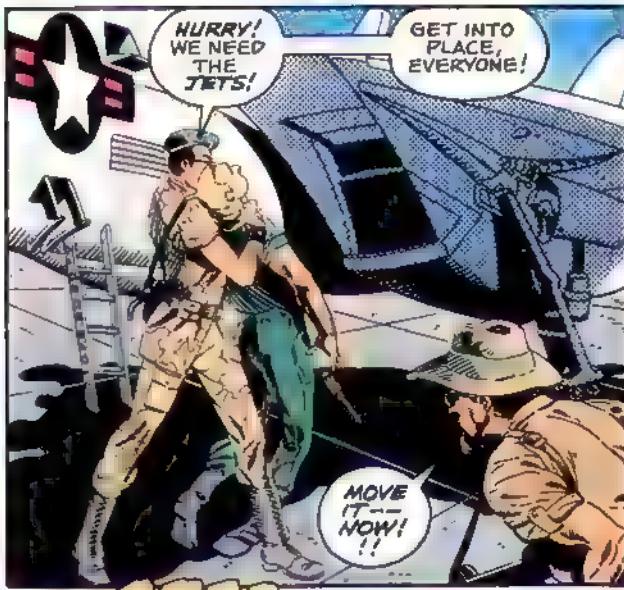
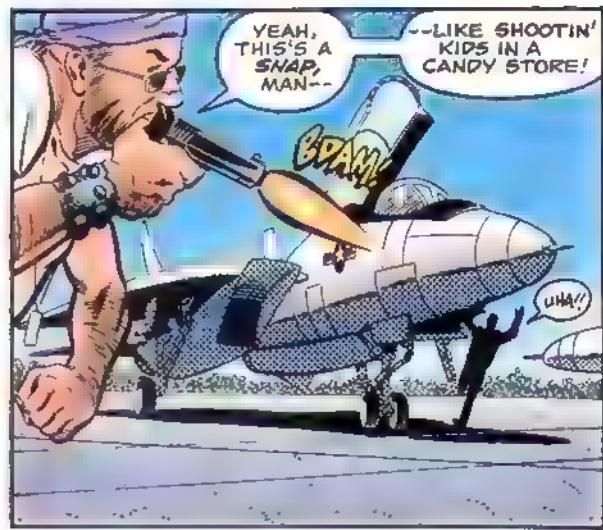
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THEY AREN'T THE SAME PERSON.

SHOWERS
NELSON AVIATION

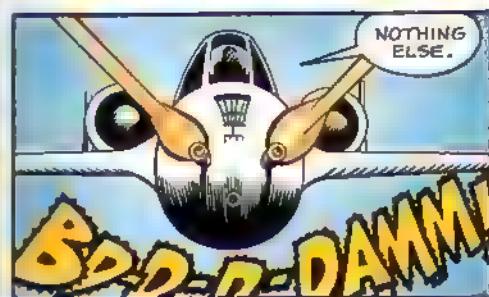
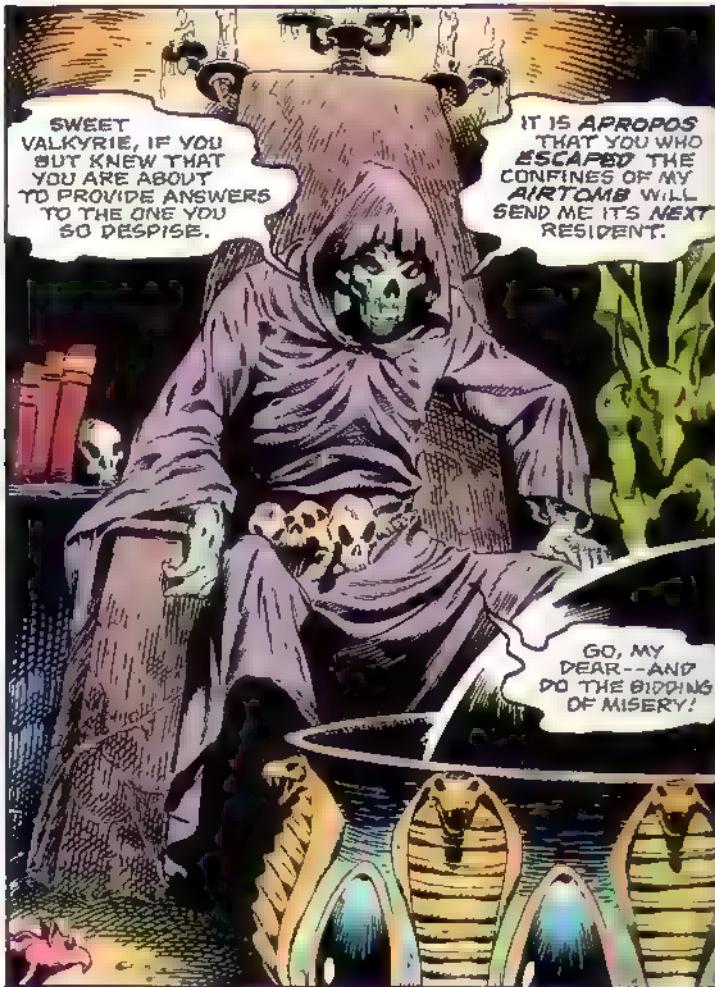
THEY'RE BOTH SO ALIKE.

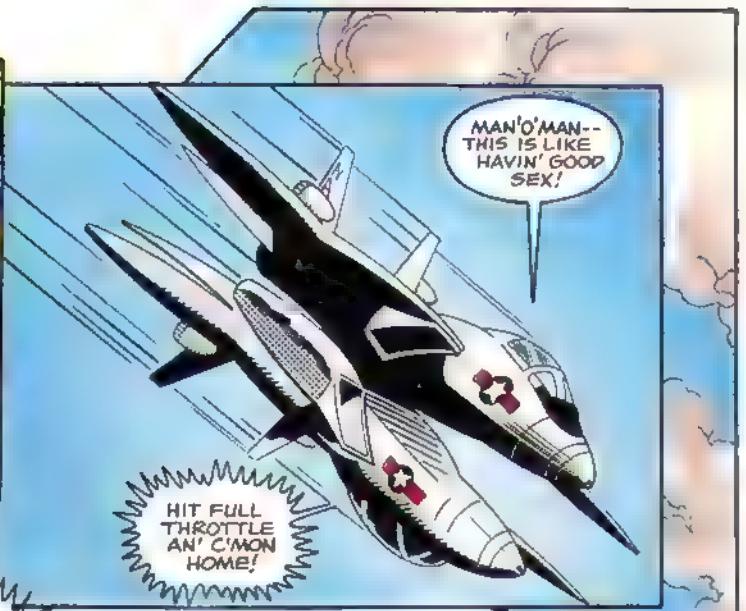


















"HAS HE BECOME
POWERFUL
ENOUGH TO
CREATE THOSE
ABERRATIONS?"

"LOOK AGAIN--WARRIORS--
THE HUMANS WHO CALL
THEMSELVES THE NEW
WAVE--"

© MUNICH GUDIO 96

MAX

"THEY RISE
TO BATTLE
ZZED'S
CREATURES.
WHAT DOES
HE WANT?
WHAT IS HE
AFTER?"

"I MUST POSSESS THAT
KNOWLEDGE. I MUST KNOW
THAT ANSWER BEFORE
IT DESTROYS ME!"



THE PROWLER

I--WHAT?
OH, DON'T GIVE
ME THAT. PLEASE,
LEO--DON'T START.
HUUH? I--

...NO, LEO. I
SAID I'M IN
BALTIMORE.
IT'S IN MARYLAND,
YOU KNOW?
JEEZ...

LEO, PLEASE
CALM DOWN.

YES, I
REALIZE I
DIDN'T TELL
YOU WHERE
I WAS GOING.

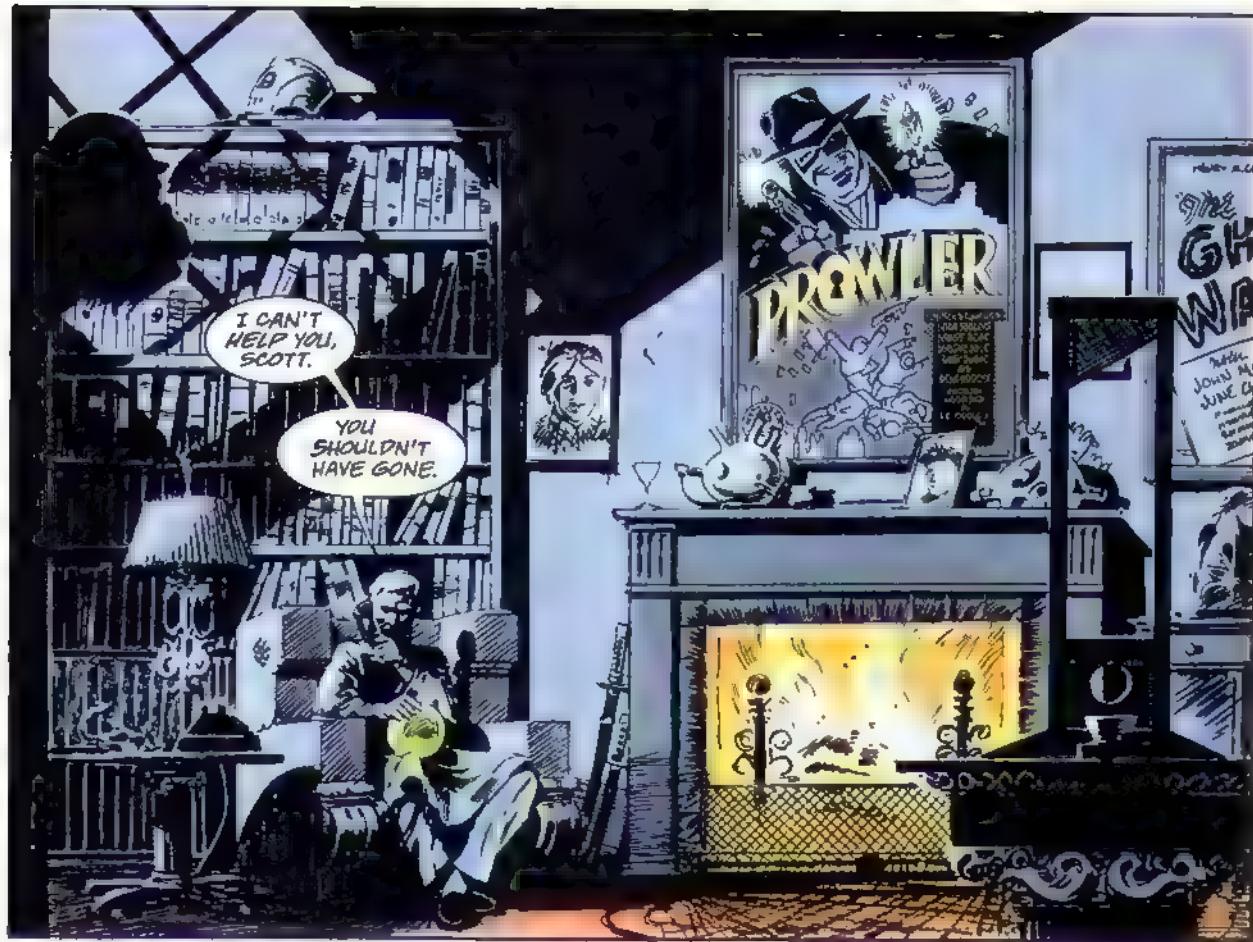
OH, CRAP.

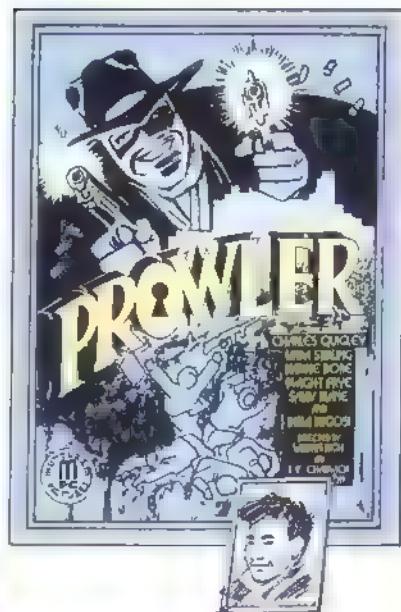
STORY: TIMOTHY TRUMAN
PENCILS: BRENT ANDERSON
INKS: MIKE DRINGENBERG
LETTERS: TIM HARKINS
COLORS: BRENT ANDERSON
EDITS: FRED BURKE
SPECIAL THANKS TO MARY WOLFMAN
AND DOLIS MOENCH.

NOTE: EVENTS IN TOTAL ECLIPSE FOLLOW THE EVENTS DEPICTED
IN REVENGE OF THE PROWLER #1-4

-FB/TT

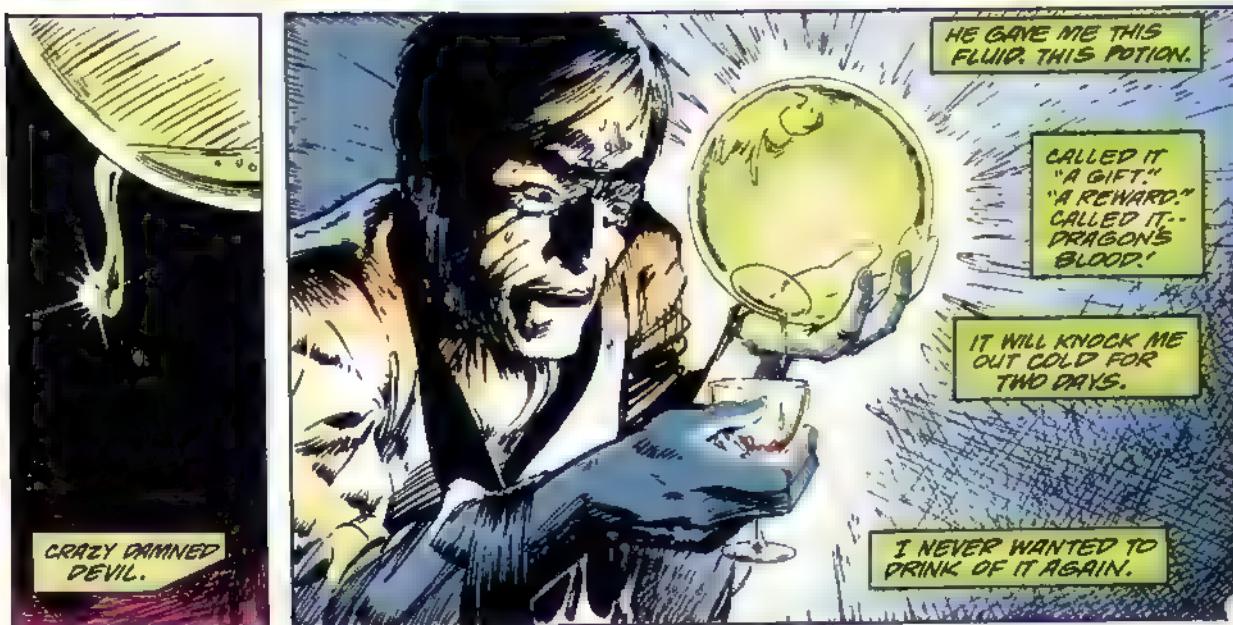
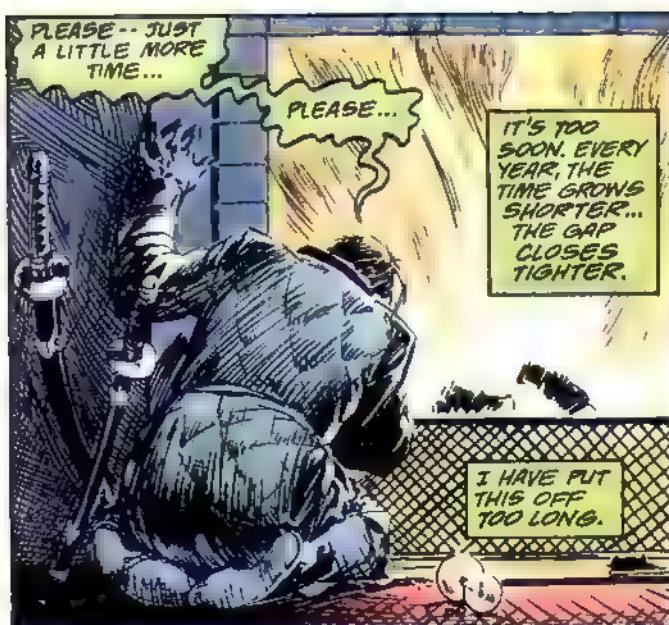


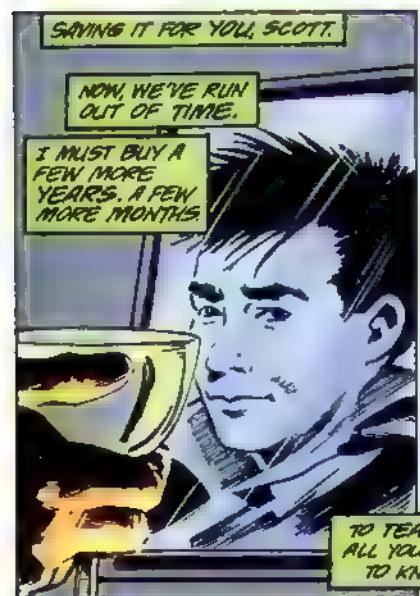
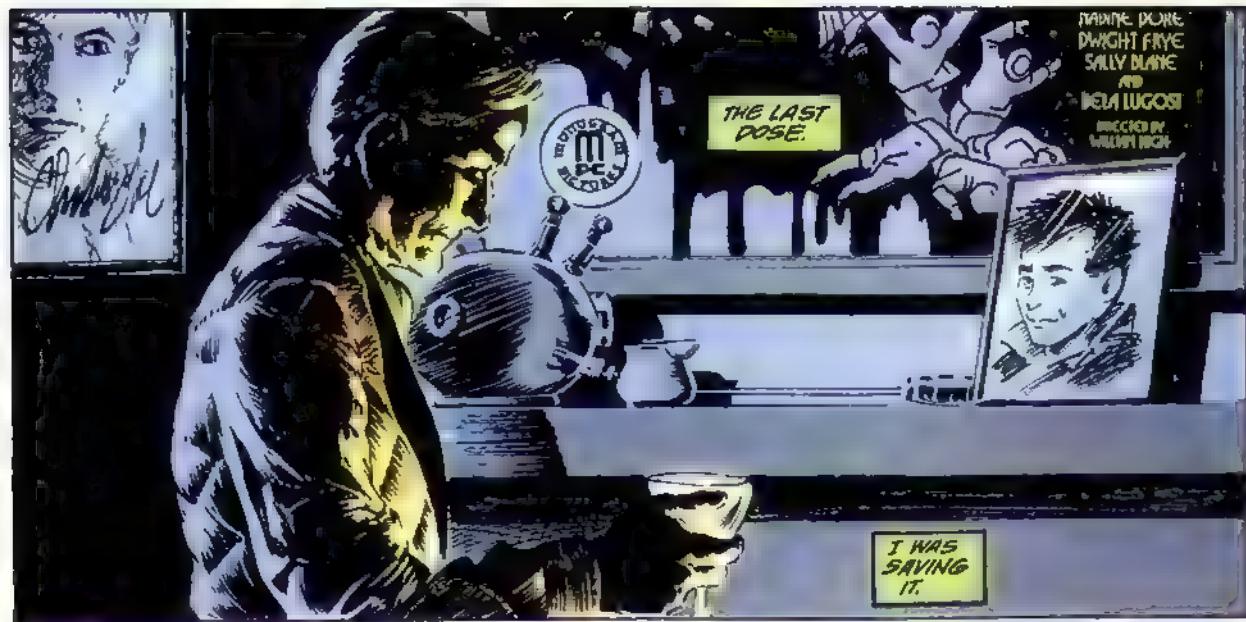


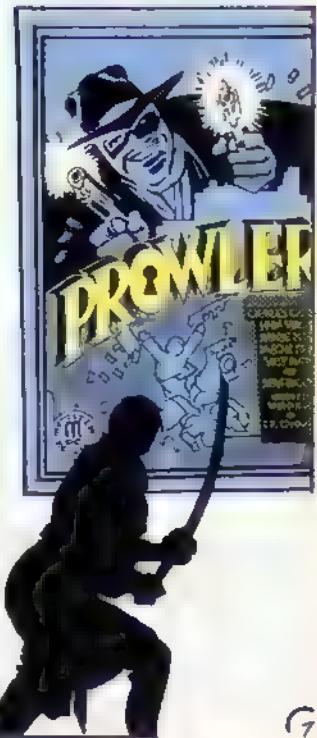


I HAVE LIVED A LONG TIME IN THIS WORLD. HA! SOME MIGHT SAY TOO LONG. I HAVE SEEN EVERY PECCULAR CURVE OF IT MUD-SMEARED UNDERBELLY, EVERY CURIOUS, EVIL SHADOW IN ITS NIGHT.















To be continued in the pages of...TOTAL ECLIPSE #21

Ten Years After!

1958: I was four years old, saw a giant toaster, and it made me want to read.

1968: I learned that the same company that was responsible for the giant toaster in the Bat Cave was also responsible for screwing Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster out of what should have been their lives' pension—Superman.

1978: I was mad as hell and couldn't take it any more.

You could say that Eclipse Comics was formed because I believed that comics writers and artists should get a square deal. After all, I thought, shouldn't we, as readers of heroic fiction, fight for the rights of the people behind those same heroes?

When, in April 1977, my brother Jan and I (no, for the last time, we are *not* the same Jan and Dean—we came first!) went down to City Hall in New York to register Eclipse Enterprises as a publishing partnership, we didn't think that ten years later, many of our basic publishing policies would be industry standards. We just wanted to start a business with a firm moral underpinning.

I must say (and I'm speaking for Jan here, too) that receiving a letter from Jerry Siegel ten years later thanking us for our "pioneering efforts to bring ethics, common decency, and economic justice to a cut-throat industry" makes it all worthwhile.

It is we who should thank Jerry and Joe. You may think me overly sentimental, but every time I look at that letter from Jerry, it brings tears to my eyes.

I sometimes wonder what kind of world



by Dean Mullaney

we live in when men like Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster—who created one of the most recognizable, archetypical, righteous, and (let's not forget) profitable heroes of the twentieth century—are on the sidelines, and the fast-talking businessmen who took advantage of them have prospered beyond their due.

I thought Superman was supposed to protect us from people like that.

You may be wondering why, in this first issue of *Total Eclipse*, I'm writing about Superman, Jerry Siegel, and Joe Shuster. It makes perfect sense to me. In fact, I can throw a whole bunch of other names at you and have them make sense in this context, too—Chris Claremont, Frank Miller, George Perez, and John Byrne.

What's the connection? Each one of them has made more money from his work in comic books than Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster combined.

And they deserve the money they've earned! Way to go, Chris! Way to go, Frank! I'm all for you.

I wish Jerry and Joe and all the others, like Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko, got the royalties today's top creators get. And that's the point I'm getting at. In 1978, when we started Eclipse Comics with the policy of giving writers and artists royalties on every copy sold, neither Marvel nor DC gave any royalties. Today's creators get royalties, and I'm glad they do. I know it's not an exaggeration to say that it's in large part a

reaction to Eclipse.

Allowing writers and artists to earn royalties is only part of the Eclipse picture. If you look at the copyright and trademark information on page two of this issue, you'll see a list that's fairly complicated and much longer than the ones you're used to seeing. The reason is simple: another of Eclipse's pioneering policies was to acknowledge that the creators were just that—creators.

Did you know, incidentally, that Chris Claremont is not the author of *The X-Men*, or that George Perez is not the author of *Wonder Woman*? No, I'm not kidding. And, no, I'm not insinuating that either of these great guys hires a ghost to do his work for him.

According to the laws of the United States of America, Marvel Comics, A New World Company, is the author of *The X-Men*, and DC Comics Inc. is the author of *Wonder Woman*. Don't believe me? Go to the Library of Congress and look it up for yourselves.

When Eclipse was formed in 1977, I made it a point to read the Copyright Act of 1976 and was particularly interested in the section dealing with the "work made for hire" clause that is an essential part of almost every comic book publishing contract from Marvel and DC Comics even today. We vowed that Eclipse would *never* force a writer or artist to sign such an agreement. And we never have.

All of this may not necessarily affect you directly, but whether you realize it or not, it



already has.

People like Don McGregor, Paul Gulacy, P. Craig Russell, Marshall Rogers, Steve Gerber, Jim Starlin, and Steve Englehart insisted on being called the "creators" of their own work. And if they didn't insist, Eclipse wouldn't be here. And if Eclipse had never come into being, I doubt very much you would have heard of Pacific Comics, First Comics, Comico, or Dark Horse Publishing.

In 1978, when we released *Sabre* by McGregor and Gulacy, it was the first graphic novel ever published for the comics specialty market. There was nothing like it available to fans walking into the local comics store. To this day, I recall distributor Phil Seuling, the man responsible for the existence of the specialty store market, standing up from behind his desk holding a photocopy of *Sabre* in his hands, screaming, "Six dollars for a comic book!"

Obviously, everyone's perception of comics and graphic albums has changed since our efforts a decade ago. For me, the decade began with a trip to Don McGregor's second floor loft apartment on New York's Bowery one night to watch an episode of *77 Sunset Strip* on Don's cranky 16 mm projector. This was before the advent of cable TV. If you wanted to see old television shows, for the most part, you needed to locate a 16 mm print (complete with cigarette commercials and all!).

At any rate, while Don was feeding the

film through the projector, trying to see if he could recognize Efrem Zimbalist, Jr. in the tiny frames (Don always was a little weird!), I was wandering about and noticed what I believed to be a picture of Jimi Hendrix on a door. Since Hendrix was one of my musical gurus, I took a closer look and discovered that it was a pencilled drawing by Paul Gulacy. It turned out to be a new character the pair were working on, and one over which they wanted to retain copyright ownership. Are we coming full circle, or what?!

Suffice it to say, a publishing company was born later that evening between the Brothers Mullaney.

I still remember that second floor walk-up on the Bowery. I don't know who's living there now, or if the lighting supply storefront below still promises imported chandeliers to passersby. To me, it will always be the unlikely birthplace of Eclipse Comics.

"Born on the Bowery"—sounds like a bad Leo Gorcey/Huntz Hall thriller co-starring Bela Lugosi.

I've got a lot of other odd memories of that loft, come to think of it. I remember the night Don moved there from Queens. A whole bunch of us got together—among them Steve Gerber, Mary Skrenes, and Mark Gasper—to help Don transport his belongings. It took what seemed like years to pack up all of Don's books, and by the time we got over the Brooklyn Bridge and to the new place, it must have been two in the

eclipse

enterprise

morning, and we were all pretty punchy.

All I can really remember about the unpacking was Steve Gerber finding the doll house belonging to Don's daughter Lauren, in addition to a whole group of dolls, among them a G.I. Joe action figure. What the Joe was doing there I don't know. And I think by the time the Joe starting scaling the cold sides of their aluminum house, the dolls inside didn't want to know, either. Who would have guessed that less than a decade later Steve would be story editor for the newly revised *G.I. Joe* television show? Not the screaming dolls, for sure! They only escaped their play-time nightmare when Steve Skeates showed up with lots of people and lots of beer and the night went away.

That apartment was also the place where, I believe, Skeates dreamed up the concept of giving Underdog a Fortress of Solitude, certainly one of the strangest ideas ever introduced into the super dog's canon.

But I'm digressing . . . back to the reason for Eclipse Comics, without which this page would be completely blank and sitting in the middle of some child's school notebook, rather than filled with type and art in your very own comic book collection.

Don and I spent weeks working out possible formats for *Sabre*. We knew from the start that we wanted it to be a high quality package. The two of us, and Paul Gulacy, too, were sick and tired of the poor reproduction then standard in comics. This

was, for those of you not around then, before the days of Baxter paper, when every comic in America, no matter how beautifully rendered, was printed with plastic plates on cheap, grey newsprint. Don and I finally settled on a graphic novel format, modelling it after a series of newspaper strip reprints published in the late 1960s by a great pioneer comics historian, Ed Aprill.

Just prior to publication, we arranged for *Sabre* to be previewed in the fledgling *Heavy Metal* magazine, and needless to say, the graphic novel was a smash success, premiering on September 30, 1978, and going through many editions in America and abroad. One of the first ten people to pick up a copy of this, Eclipse's first publication, was none other than Marv Wolfman.

A few of the unsung contributors to Eclipse's beginnings are not commonly known, among them Sue Pollina, who gave the company its name, and the man who designed the first Eclipse logotype—now Marvel Comics' Executive Editor, Mark Gruenwald. Ten years ago Mark and I were roommates in New York, each working in a bank, wanting to make comics our career.

Funny what a difference ten years makes!

Next issue: Fred Hembeck's wedding, Tom Orzechowski's long-haired cats, and watching Sleeping Beauty with Craig Russell!

WHO'S WHO IN TOTAL ECLIPSE



Airboy

David Nelson III follows in his father's footsteps as a heroic aviator in his bat-winged plane, Birdie.



Skywolf

WWII fighting companion of David Nelson II, Lawrence Wolfe continues to fight by the new Airboy's side.



Prowler

Young art student Scott Kida has reluctantly taken up the mantle of 1940s crimefighter Leo Kragg, who is his mentor.



Strike!

Dennis Foreman discovered Sgt. Strike's power harness and took it for his own, using it against CIA wishes to become a superhero.



Misery

Misery's Airtomb is final home for the guilty or wandering spirits of downed pilots, upon whose energy Misery feeds.

The immortal Zzed originally battled David Nelson II in the 1940s. To end his own life, Zzed must also destroy the universe.



Valkyrie

Trapped for thirty years by Misery, this ex-Nazi awoke to find herself in love with the son of her former lover.



Black Angel

Holly McCovey became the new Black Angel to save Valkyrie from Soviet charges of Nazi war crimes.



Prowler

Movie-maker, millionaire, and vigilante, the aging Leo Kragg is the vicious and enigmatic enemy of criminals everywhere.



Sgt. Strike

WWII hero Russell Carlyle, captured by aliens in the 1950s, has just returned to Earth with a powerful blaster.



Zzed

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Zzed

He has lived for centuries, for millennia, from the earliest days of human life on this planet. He grows weary of existence, but each attempt he makes to draw death closer ends in failure. Zzed cannot die. At least not by earthly means.

Now he seeks the ultimate end, for Zzed knows that the only way to finish his own life is to destroy the universe. After decades of seeking an answer, finally a plan begins to take form...in his dreams.

The universe is lost.

But some watch from the shadows, intent on thwarting Zzed, on turning his doomsday plan to their own ends. Others, heroic men and women from earth and beyond, seek only to stop the endless chain of destruction before it is too late. Billions of lives hang in the balance.

Total Eclipse

It's Eclipse Comics' Tenth Anniversary. In this and future issues, you'll encounter Airboy, Valkyrie, Skywolf, Miracleman, The Prowler, Strike, the Heap, Aztec Ace and virtually every star from Eclipse's first decade of innovative comics publishing.

Marv Wolfman, writer, is the author of *The New Teen Titans*, *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, *Tomb of Dracula*, and countless other acclaimed comic books. The Zzed saga is his most intricate plot to date.

Bo Hampton, pencil artist, is well-known for his detailed linework and powerful layouts in books such as *Airboy*, *Lost Planet*, *Luger*, and *The New Mutants*. *Total Eclipse* is a new peak in his artistic development.

Will Blyberg, ink artist, has used his eye for texture, shadow, and depth on *Valkyrie*, *Airboy*, *DNA Agents*, and others. His flawless execution breathes added life into this epic adventure.

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